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ABSTRACT

This book presents six critical commentaries on the state of the discipline and practice of adult education. "The Critical Turn in Adult Education Theory" (Michael R. Welton) takes the position that the critical theoretical tradition from Marx to Habermas can provide a foundation for an emancipatory educational practice. "Transformation Theory of Adult Education" (Jack Mezirow) presents an evolving theory of adult learning that involves an analysis of meaning structures and how they are transformed through reflection, rational discourse, and emancipatory action. "Critical Commentaries on the Role of the Adult Educator: From Self-Directed Learning to Postmodernist Sensibilities" (Michael Collins) includes a critique of competency-based education and a challenge to the idea of the adult educator as facilitator. "Motherwork: A Radical Proposal to Rethink Work and Education" (Mechthild Hart) draws upon the tradition of woman's life-affirming labor to defend vulnerable, oppressed women. "In Defense of the Lifeworld: A Habermasian Approach to Adult Learning" (Michael R. Welton) shows that Habermas' sociological theory and theory of rationalization provide the necessary framework and elements for the study of social learning processes. "Declining Opportunities: Adult Education, Culture, and Postmodernity" (Donovan Plumb) contends that postmodernist discourses raise deep doubts about critical adult education's practices. "Conclusion: Dialogues, Encounters, and Debates" offers personal thoughts on the other chapters. The book contains 397 references. (YLB)

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